

HOUSTON, TX – Today, **Congressman Charlie Gonzalez (TX-20)**, Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Elections, **Congressman Gene Green (TX-29) and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18)**

convened a Congressional forum covering the topic of voting rights, voter suppression, and ensuring equal participation in the democratic and republican aspects of our government. The forum was held at Texas Southern University’s Thurgood Marshall School of Law in Houston and featured a number of legal scholars and experts on voting rights. The Representatives issued the following statements regarding the Congressional forum:

“The past two years have witnessed a concerted effort by states across the country to deny millions of Americans the right most fundamental to being an American citizen,” said **Congressman Charlie Gonzalez**

. “The proponents of these new laws claim to be worried about voter fraud but admit that they have no evidence of such fraud. At today’s forum, we discussed how these laws disproportionately affect minority communities, seniors, people with disabilities, and the poor. We cannot allow our elections to be overtaken and manipulated by discriminatory laws, especially when there is no reason for them. Rather, we must fight to ensure that every eligible, American citizen can safely exercise his or her constitutionally protected right to vote.”

“The principle that makes the United States the land of the free is the right for every eligible American to cast their vote,” said **Congressman Gene Green**. “Voter turnout has not been as strong as it could be and there should not be any reason why state legislators are making it harder for people to vote.”

“We all must fight now to protect all of our right to participate in making this nation great. We must challenge these horrible laws regarding voting rights that would unravel the democracy we have been building for generations. We must get the word out to our communities to identify who may be unfairly barred from voting so that we can help them get what they need to vote,” said **Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee**. “We have to get the word out in states where the unfair restrictions have been blocked by courts so that citizens know that they can indeed vote and we need to help them get to the polls. We need to call out all the powerful and wealthy interests who would tell hard working Americans, young and old, male and female, White and Black, Latino and Asian and Native American, that they cannot have a say in who shall govern us.”

Witnesses at the forum included Rice University Professor Chandler Davidson, Chad W. Dunn, an attorney who argued against the new voter photo ID law, Nina Perales, Vice President of Litigation for MALDEF, Rogene Gee Calvert, Former-President of the Asian Chamber of Commerce, Gary Bledsoe, President of Texas NAACP and Texas State Representative Trey Martinez Fischer (D 116).

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